

Red Rock Eater Digest

Most Recent Article: Mon, 18 Aug 2003



online privacy

[I am not entirely sure from reading this whether it genuinely protects privacy. (What exactly can your "home publisher" do with your information?) But this is the general type of system I think we probably need on the net and elsewhere.]

Date: Tue, 24 Oct 1995 12:40:03 -0700
From: "Newshare Corp." <newshare@rmcl.crocker.com>
Subject: Clickshare(sm) alpha up; "test drives" available

CLICKSHARE UNIVERSAL-ID, PROFILING AND MICRO-TRANSACTION SYSTEM ENTERS ALPHA; PERSONALIZED "TEST DRIVES" BEGIN

WILLIAMSTOWN, Mass., Oct. 23 -- Newshare Corp. begins shipping to selected publishers this week the alpha version of its breakthrough Clickshare(SM) system to track and settle Internet-wide micro-transactions.

"Clickshare removes one of the biggest barriers to the evolution of the Internet by giving users universal-ID access to a free market for digital information," said Bill Densmore, Newshare president and cofounder. "Yet the information -- and the user relationship -- remain physically controlled by the publisher."

Clickshare's personal Newshare(sm) topic-profiling and custom-linking facilities are open for public use at <http://www.clickshare.com/tryit.html>. Transaction-handling capabilities, and an initial base of Publishing Members, will be launched in early 1996.

"At that point, publishers will be able to sell each others' information for as little as a dime per click, exchanging royalties and commissions seamlessly," added Densmore. "Internet Service Providers will be able to act as on ramps into this content universe as well."

Clickshare requires no special software for consumers beyond their Web browser and costs a publisher as little as \$795 to join. Publishers can sell information by subscription or per-query to their own users, and set all pricing. Newshare is now soliciting a broader group of "beta" publishers.

"Publishers thinking toward the next century want to maintain a close relationship with their users," says David M. Oliver, Newshare's managing director-technology and principal Clickshare author. "And this implies registering them, profiling their interests and preferences, authenticating and verifying their use of resources, and billing them for charged items. Clickshare does this for publishers and for users in background, not in-your-face."

WHAT IS CLICKSHARE (sm)?

Clickshare is a complete, distributed, user-management system which provides the only true third-party validation of web usage. It differentiates "eyeballs" rather than just

counting them. It protects personal privacy and the publisher/subscriber relationship.

Clickshare (SM) permits consumers to access information on multiple, unrelated Internet Web servers with a single ID and password. It gives publishers revenues not only from their own information but from the information their users buy elsewhere. And it gives advertisers the best way to measure web traffic by specific user.

"Clickshare's versatile architecture is core technology for a worldwide free market for digital communications -- a true information exchange," said Densmore.

Newshare Corp., is based in Berkshire County, Massachusetts, a region which has spawned several multimedia startups because of its high quality-of-life, accessibility to New York and Boston and good talent pool. Formed in September, 1994, it is privately held.

HOW IT WORKS

Clickshare has two principal components, Oliver says. Clickshare-enhanced Web server software runs on publishers' computers as a primary piece of controlling software or as an adjunct to other UNIX-based server software. It logs user registration, authentication, personalization and micro-transactions.

The second piece of essential software, the Clickshare token-validation service (TWS) server, is run by Newshare Corp. or licensees. It creates and validates authentication tokens, brokers non-personal user preferences among publishers, and maintains "page visit" records from multiple independent sites sortable by anonymous user number, page visited and site ID.

"At no time does Clickshare know a user's name or demographic profile," says Oliver. "Only the user's home-base publisher has this information."

Clickshare has been called a an example of "wise thinking" (Steve Outing, Editor & Publisher Interactive, Sept. 18, 1995) and "the excelsior that will allow web businesses to sell information by the page" (WEBster, Oct. 3, 1995).

Each user has a single "home base" at a Publishing Member (likely to be a local or speciality publication with whom they have a continuing relation). Clickshare users register just once with their home base, providing credit-card information by phone, fax, mail or secure Internet connection. At no time do credit-card numbers or other personal information traverse the Clickshare system.

Thereafter, a user begins a Clickshare(sm) session as simply as logging in to the online world in the first place. The user must enter a personal ID and password just once during each session. In response, their home Publishing Member provides them a personalized, updated, jumpoff page of useful links, based on the personal topical-interest profile the user provided at initial registration.

As they browse effortlessly to Clickshare-enabled and other sites, users can be confident that the link between their identity and their tracks does not go beyond their home Publisher. Clickshare provides mechanisms to establish charge limits and receive periodic reports of charges.

The Clickshare-enhanced Web Server -- which is browser independent -- is provided to Member Publishers by Newshare

Corp. free under license. Newshare's back-end service network exchanges data with the Internet servers of Clickshare-enabled sites, validating users and tracking all discrete page accesses -- chargeable or free -- across every participating site.

Clickshare tracks content served to users regardless of the location of their "home" Publishing Member. Aggregate micro-charges, settled monthly or more frequently, allocating commissions, royalties and transaction fees, thus form the basis of a system resembling an ATM network.

Clickshare leaves to each Publishing Member the marketing contours of its relationship to its customers. Each Publishing Member is thus free to use its own model for user subscription or per-page rates.

A portion of all fees accumulated by a user for all visited Clickshare-enabled sites is retained by the user's home Publishing Member. This is termed a "referral commission." And Newshare retains a portion for its role in tracking and clearing transactions. At least 50 percent of each transaction goes to the content owner as a royalty.

MORE THAN IP NUMBERS

Beyond the model of payment for access to information, because it tracks known users (rather than Internet Protocol (IP) numbers), Clickshare may also serve as a third-party circulation/viewership auditing mechanism for the advertising and publishing industry, while leaving to users control of release of demographic and other data, and respecting their desires for privacy.

"This transparent and efficient mechanism makes it economically practical to bill information purchases of as little as a dime and possibly less," says Oliver. "Thus Clickshare provides the platform on which the consumer of the 21st century can freely and conveniently access independently owned information worldwide, paying through existing credit structures."

For more news and information, send email to info@newshare.com or see: <http://www.newshare.com/clickshare/>

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The Internet is not about Sales Brochures